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the omissions and concentrating attention upon what is offered, it must be admitted that here is a banquet of social, literary and economic facts on a scale of overwhelming profusion. Nothing short of a life-time of the most self-sacrificing labor given to the accumulation of details could produce such results as these. We have tables of population, statistics of commerce, regulations of guilds, lists of artists and their works. Do you wish to know about the pleasures of the great, their dress, the current forms of gambling, their duels, the annual *villeggiatura*? We have all heard, without knowing too precisely the exact significance, of such indigenous institutions as the *ridotto*, the *cicisbeo*, the *commedia dell' arte*, the singing societies attached to the hospitals; Signor Molmenti with his lordly command of the sources establishes these matters upon a basis of irrefutable fact. The solidity and usefulness of the work is therefore beyond dispute, but no reader, overwhelmed with the accumulation of details, will fail to ask himself whether a little more self-repression would not have produced a pleasanter result. It was, I think, Macaulay, who after reading Hallam emerged with the dictum: "I never knew a man who offered so much information with so little entertainment". Unfortunately Signor Molmenti lays himself particularly open to Macaulay's pleasantry because decadent Venice has left us a few compact monuments, in which we may see, as in a mirror, the whole life of the times. Such are the paintings of Longhi, Canaletto and Guardi, the comedies of Goldoni, and the memoirs of certain lively and distinguished natives and foreigners, such as De Brosses, Goethe and Casanova. At the hand of such guides as these a revival of that eighteenth-century world of vanities and pleasures could be achieved with dispatch, and would be wholly significant and enjoyable. An historian with an eye upon essentials could do no better than gracefully to cede the floor to these important witnesses. The final judgment upon Signor Molmenti's great work must mingle with frank appreciation a word of regret—regret that he did not offer less in order that he might give us more.

FERDINAND SCHEVILL.

*A History of English Journalism to the Foundation of the Gazette.*

By J. B. WILLIAMS. (London and New York: Longmans, Green and Company. 1908. Pp. xi, 293.)

AFTER the preliminary articles in the *English Historical Review* and the *Nineteenth Century and After*, now included as part of the present volume, one was prepared to welcome such a study very heartily. The works of Hunt, Andrews, Grant and Bourne, interesting and important as they are in the main, scarcely cover the field of this new book with either the thoroughness or the accuracy desired by one interested in the history of journalism or of the seventeenth century. Based as this is on the Burney and Thomason collections in the British Museum and on

contemporary authority besides, minutely at times almost microscopically examined with critical acumen and antiquarian zeal, the present study is much the most scholarly account of the beginnings of English journalism which has yet appeared. It is a mine of information. Its account of the emergence of the newspaper through its stages of news-book, coranto, pamphlet, news-letter and the like is in the main new, important and interesting. One would like to say as much for the book as a whole. It is, indeed, an important contribution to the subject. But its interest, and to some extent its value, are limited in certain well defined ways. The product of extensive research, it seems almost too close to its material to escape at times from a categorical, not to say catalogical treatment of its subject, destructive alike to clearness and interest. This is accompanied by a certain lack of what will seem to many a proper historical perspective. And it is curious to observe in this connection that one finds no reference, in preface, text or notes, to any preceding history of journalism, nor to the works of either Gardiner or Masson. This may, in turn, be related to the Royalist and Anglican bias evident in many places. The Royalist *Mercurius Aulicus* "at once struck a higher literary note than the rubbish which had poured out on the side of Parliament" (p. 41); "the tailors and cobblers officering the army and the tradesmen bent on enriching themselves in Parliament" (p. 80); "a mistake having been made in the spelling of the Latin at the start it is characteristic of Puritan obstinacy that the mistake was persisted in" (p. 53); "Cromwell was about to make another attempt to obtain the Crown" (p. 155); the gross and widespread immorality under the Independent régime was due to the fact that "the lack of authority in religious matters had produced a corrosive effect on family life", etc. (p. 145 ff.); these are a few of many flings at the Puritan party. There may be some truth in some of them. But together they form a serious indictment, which will seem to many students of the period based on little more than inadequate historical perspective, not to say knowledge, and pure prejudice, and which should not be allowed to pass unchallenged. It certainly does not appear from the instances quoted that Parliamentary writers were coarser and less witty than their Royalist antagonists. Nor does it seem that the Cromwellians were much more inclined to repressive measures than the Clarendonians. One need not hold a brief for either party, but certainly one would not wish to write history from the pamphlets of either side, and it scarcely seems necessary to do more than record phenomena in such a work. Of the four appendices the first reprints a contemporary Royalist account of the King's execution, but one may question whether this, as is assumed, is conclusive evidence as to who spat in Charles's face even if that was worth recording. The fourth appendix, a list of all periodicals from 1644 to 1666, most scholars will find more useful.

W. C. ABBOTT.